

*Jas Hurst*

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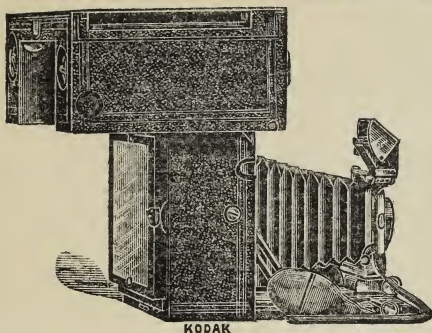
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## INTRODUCTION

THE Little Books on photography of which this is one are the outcome of "The Practical Lessons for Beginners" which have appeared every week since July, 1904, in *The Amateur Photographer*, and are still continuing. The unparalleled expression of appreciation with which those "Lessons" have met leaves little room for doubt that there are very many who would find such plain talks on every-day photographic practice useful in book form. To merely reprint the "Lessons" from *The Amateur Photographer* would hardly have been sufficient, and the subjects dealt with, therefore, have been entirely re-written. In the following pages it is hoped that the beginner will find practical help in making portraits in an ordinary living-room; but the reader is advised to procure the other Little Books which are uniform with this, the subjects of which are: "How to Ensure Correct Exposure," "Development Made Easy," and "How to Make Bad Negatives into Good."

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# HOME PORTRAITURE MADE EASY

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IF you are at all like other amateur photographers, then of course you want to take portraits. In the house or in the garden, friends singly, in couples, or in groups, the desire to take their portraits is always more or less present. There is a certain fascination in setting your camera, asking your friend to stand still, focussing, and letting off the shutter, the chief delight being in the anticipation of what an excellent portrait you will have made of So-and-so. Well, and why not ? There would be no more sensible use for your camera than depicting your friends, if only the results were more uniformly successful. Ah, *if* !

Now, you do not want me to write down here a regular handbook to portrait-photography in the home—that has been already done ; and no better, simpler, or more useful book, or books, for the beginner were ever published than *Portraiture for Amateurs—without a Studio*, written and abundantly illustrated by the Rev. F. C. Lambert, M.A., which constitute Nos. 27 and 28 of



the world-renowned *Amateur Photographer* Library series, the price of each being one shilling. If you would but spend a couple of shillings on these there would be no need for me to write this Little Book on portraiture; but I hope you will get Mr. Lambert's two books later. As a matter of fact, you do not want in a Little Book like this to begin at the beginning at all; you want to plunge into the middle of things, and be told why your results, many of them, are so bad, and how to do them better.

Now, take my word for it, the trouble is not with your camera and lens; it may be a simple outfit, it may be a cheap one, but with a much more elaborate instrument you would do no better. Nor have you reason to attribute your non-success to the fact that you have no studio, and have to be content with an ordinary living-room in which to pose your sitters. You would, as a matter of fact, find yourself far more difficultly placed were you to take your sitter into a properly appointed studio, with its blinds and reflectors, all of which require getting used to, and for a long time would perplex you much more than assist.

You must not suppose that a portrait studio is so designed that you can dump your sitter down and uncap your lens, and by reason of the lighting and construction of the studio the thing is done. Nothing of the sort. The professional portraitist does what

you must do—observe your sitter and see if the pose and light are right.

The fact is, the amateur photographer expects his lens to depict the sitter as he imagines that person to be, or as that person's image is impressed on his memory. Any person you know fairly well you remember from the aggregate of a number of mental impressions. You may meet that person one day when he or she is very ill or very tired, and yet you recognise that person, although, as a matter of fact, he is so unlike his usual self that he is probably much more like some one else in the millions of his fellow creatures. "So-and-so is not looking at all himself to-day." How often one hears that remark! It is a fact that we recognise people quite as much and more from their *tout ensemble* as from any perfect familiarity with face and features.

Suppose you ask your friend to sit near the window whilst you make his portrait. You do not notice that a ray of sunlight through the lace curtains has cast a shadow of the pattern of the curtains on his forehead; but in the photograph there it is, looking like some strange tattoo-mark.

"I can't think why I did not see that before I exposed," I fancy I hear you say. I cannot understand why you did not, either; but then, I know the same or a similar oversight has occurred before scores of times. You do not really *see* your sitter in the same

impartial manner as your lens does : you see only what you know your friend to be like ; the lens knows nothing, not remembering to have met him before.

The position of the light is capable of altering the appearance so much as to destroy likeness. Just remember that. "I did not recognise you in that light." Have you not had occasion to make that remark as you have perhaps come across a friend stooping low over a fire, or lighting a cigarette from a very strong gas jet. The relative position of his face and the light are unusual, and hence you were not familiar with the result, showing evidently that to get a recognisable likeness in a photograph you must see that the face is illuminated in a manner which gives a familiar effect.

Suppose we have a room with but one window in it. You are going to take your friend's portrait, so you place him quite near the window in order to get as much light on him as possible, whilst you stand your camera in the middle of the room, in order to get a proper distance from him. What is the result ? The face, even though the light falls on one or the other cheek, is for the most part *between* the camera and the source of light ; and if some one were to suddenly enter the room, it is ten chances to one he would move a little to one side or the other before he would recognise your sitter, as he is there seen *against* the light.

What you want to do is to change places. Set your camera in the window with your back to the light, and let your sitter take up a position well away from the window and into the room, where the light falls on the face and illuminates it.

I do not mean to say that that is all you have to do—far from it. You must remember that a face is round, and discard every portrait you make in which this roundness is not suggested. If the light falls full on an orange or ball, and you view it from a little distance, it has the appearance of a flat disc; but let the light fall on it from one side or the other, and you at once realise that it has thickness as well as width. So it is with a head and face: you must depict it so as to suggest its third dimension, and this you can only do by noticing whether the light falls on the face so as to suggest roundness.

But so many people seem to think the camera will do everything for them, and that no independent action is required of them. You must not suppose that when you have posed your sitter and focussed the lens, in some magical way the camera will perform a bit of thought-reading and produce just the nice kind of portrait which you have in your imagination.

When looking at a typical English landscape scene, and remembering how Constable depicts that sort of thing, it is futile to suppose that by exposing

a plate on that landscape just as it is you will get a Constable-like effect because you are thinking about it. Your camera and lens will at best only give you a likeness of landscape or person *as they are*—just baldly as they really are, and not as you picture to yourself how you would like them to be ; and yet this is a not uncommon fallacy. Some one wrote to me recently complaining that he cannot get the Rembrandt effects he so much admires. Of course he cannot if the effect is not there to get ; and so you cannot get roundness of the face and transparency in shadows, if the shadows do not appear transparent and the face does not look round in the reality. Get them first in your model or sitter, and then reproduce them, that is all.

I am sometimes asked, “What is wrong with my portrait of my friend ?” and I feel inclined to reply, “Nothing ; it’s your friend who is wrong.” But it isn’t your friend’s fault, because he could not see himself ; it is the fault of the photographer, who did not first see that his friend was right. If you get the pose, expression, and lighting in the original, and then photograph fairly correctly, you will get pose, expression, and lighting right in your picture, and you will find you have come much more nearly to getting a good and satisfactory likeness of your friend.

But you will want to be getting to work, and my advice is that at first



you content yourself with head and shoulder portraits, and do not attempt to include the rest of the figure—not just at present.

You may feel that placing your sitter in the middle of the room as I suggest will be depriving him of so much light that it will necessitate a very long exposure. That may be so, but better put up with that difficulty, and have the light *on* the face instead of *behind* it. For, after all, if your model is near the window, it is only just those parts on which the light directly falls which are so light as to be capable of short exposure. You do not realise this, because the general notion is that of light; but the shadow side, and indeed all the shadows in the features, will be the deeper and darker, because they are up against and near to the source of light.

Don't forget that, within certain limits, the farther the model is from the source of light, the more light will there be in the shadows, because it has had more space in which to spread out and so creep into the shadows.

In one of the *Amateur Photographer* beginners' lessons I quoted a good deal from an article on "Portraiture by the Window," and I have since heard of so many who derived a great deal of profit therefrom, that I can hardly do better than repeat part of what I then wrote.

To revert to what I have just said about the shadows being more intense

if close to the source of light, notice that close to a lamp or candle the shadows cast are much *harder*—that is, the edges are more sharply defined, and the contrast more sudden, than at a greater distance. This, of course, applies equally to the face and the window. Look for yourself and see if it is not so. Watch the person seated on the window-seat; notice how dark the wrinkles are, how black the shadows beside the nose and about the ear farthest from the light. You do not think about these dark shadows when they are there on the person himself, but if they were exactly reproduced in a print you would probably exclaim. Keep on observing and noting; you will gradually discover a lot of funny things you never thought about before, and you will avoid them when doing portraits.

What applies to shadows in the opposite direction applies to the lights, and most amateurs get the high lights on the face too strong and harsh; and it is quite possible, if you are compelled for want of space to place your sitter close to the window, that it will be an advantage to cover it with white tissue-paper or fine linen, so as to diffuse the light.

But we are not getting on very quickly.

Let us return to the question of the direction of the light, and, as already proposed, place the camera so as to have your back more or less to the light; or, better still, especially if the

rooms of the house be small, let camera and sitter be at right angles to the wall in which the window is situated.

Now, a passage or landing possessing a window on one side is an excellent pitch for making portraits ; and now refer to the two accompanying sketches, and try and follow my description step by step. The first thing to do is to get the window arranged so that it can be controlled, or rather, so that the light can be controlled after it comes through the window. On nearly all windows there is a blind hung that draws from the top to the bottom. This blind is usually of an opaque nature, and will allow little light to pass the window when it is drawn. If your window is not provided with such a blind, get one at once. If it has one, take it off *and place it at the bottom of the window*, using the same set of fasteners and catches which was used at the top. Fix it exactly as it was fixed for running at the top, only have it so that you can draw it from the bottom up to the top. There is rarely a time when we have too much light striking the subject from the top of the window ; but there is seldom a time when there is not too much side light, and the arrangement of the blind, as given, is for the express purpose of overcoming this troublesome matter of having one side of the face too strongly illuminated and the other side too deeply buried in shadow.

Now refer to the first diagram. On

the left we have the window wall, the break in the line representing the window; the background is shown by the double line at right angles to the wall. Then observe the following points. Place the sitter the same distance from the window that the window is wide; for instance, an ordinary window is about 4 ft. wide; then



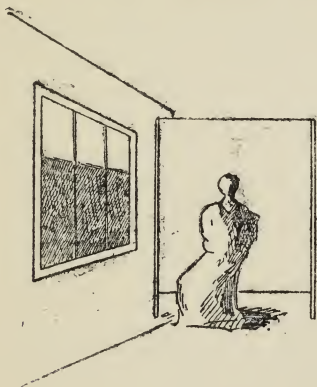
place the sitter 4 ft. from it. In the diagram the sitter is represented as a little too far forward; generally it will be found best to place the sitter abreast of the farther end of the window frame.

This I have endeavoured to show in the second little diagram. Here we see the sitter about opposite the farther side of the window-frame, and about as far away from the window as the window is wide.

The blind is shown drawn up over

the window to the height of the sitter's head. The background is here seen rather close to the sitter. This may be necessitated by want of space, but at all times give as much space between the sitter and the background as possible.

The blind having been drawn up as suggested, you now get a top light, or rather, a top-side light, instead of a full-side one, and this will be found



more effective. From the level of the sitter's head to the top of the window there is to be no blind or shade, unless the light is very intense, and then it may be advisable to cover it with tissue-paper hung from the top of the window-frame by drawing-pins.

We have supposed that the sitter is placed 4 ft. from the window; then place the camera 2 ft. from the wall, at such a distance from the sitter as will give the image of required size. Next comes the most important point,



which has to do with the lighting of the face. Let the sitter turn the face *directly away from the light*, looking towards the other wall or into the room, and then let him begin to turn very slowly back towards the camera; and when he or she has reached the point where you can see from the camera the point of the ear on the shadow side just beginning to come into view, you may feel assured you have got what is probably the best aspect or pose.

Mind, I don't want you to always adhere precisely to this formula; but it will give you a good starting-point, and if you can get some patient and obliging friend as model to devote an hour in thus experimenting, you will learn much, and will then try the patience of your next actual sitter much less.

Observe closely how the light affects the face under these conditions. Whilst the head has been turning towards the light, you will have been able to note how the light gradually creeps round the face, and it may be that you will decide to let the face remain rather more profile or more full-face than the example given, on account of a nice arrangement of light which you wish to secure. Beware of the profile portrait. The face often looks attractive enough when seen in the profile, but it is not often that it proves satisfactory in the photograph. A three-quarter view, or rather less, generally seems to convey the best

likeness and pleases most the sitter and one's friends. Now, it is quite possible that even if all these directions are exactly followed, owing to the smallness of the room or narrowness of the passage, and consequent close proximity of the wall opposite to the window, the side of the face next to it will, despite all our efforts, be too dark, in which case we must avail ourselves of the services of a reflector of a simple kind.

Anything white—a bed-sheet or white table-cloth or white paper—will serve as a reflector ; it should be thrown over a clothes-horse, or in some such manner supported, and when placed opposite to the window, but just out of the field of view of the lens, it will be found to reflect into the shadow side of the face a surprising amount of light.

If you can secure the help of a friend and the services of a patient model, ask the friend to alternately set the reflector up and withdraw it whilst you are standing by the camera ; note the difference it makes on the shadow side of the face. So great is the difference that there is danger of making the dark side of the face too light ; but never use a reflector if you can help it—only resort thereto if the circumstances seem to demand it. A reflector indiscreetly used may easily make the shadow side of the face too light, and so rob it of some of its effect of roundness ; we do not want ugly black shadows, but we

do not want to wipe out the shadows entirely.

In the article to which I referred as being quoted at some length when writing my original "Lesson for Beginners" on this same subject, the author, Mr. Felix Rayner, sums up the whole matter in a number of points, and, at the risk of being thought to reiterate, I will give them, and the student who really wants to make decent home portraits with a minimum of trouble should be sure that he has understood them all.

"First of all, the subject should be placed the same distance from the window that it measures in width. In other words, if the window is 4 ft. wide, place the subject about 4 ft. from it, and as it were at right angles to it, allowing the full opening of the window to be in front of the subject.

"Second: Draw the blind on the window upward until it is on a level with the top of the subject's head, leaving the upper portion of the window, above the subject's head, open.

"Third: Place the camera about half as far from the wall in which the window is as the subject is distant from the wall [note that this is so represented in the first little sketch]. In other words, if the subject is 4 ft. from the window, have the camera placed about 2 ft. from the wall in which the window is situated.

"Fourth: Have the subject turn the head directly away from the light,

facing out into the room, and then begin to turn very slowly back towards the camera ; and when the head has reached the point where you can see, from the camera, the ear on the shadow side just beginning to come into view, you will have a three-quarter view of the face.

“ Fifth : Focus the camera.

“ Sixth : If the shadows need illumination, place a white reflector on that side, and use only enough reflected light to give the amount of illumination desired, and no more. It is best that the reflector be used the last thing, and never use it until you are fully convinced that you need it. There are times when the light will change, even after the lighting is made up, and in a very few seconds, and if the reflector had been on, the change could not have been seen as readily as if it were off.”

Now, the mention of a reflector may mystify you. It need not. A reflector is not a specially prepared piece of apparatus on which you have got to expend money. Practically anything presenting a large white surface will serve. A white sheet, a white tablecloth, white paper—yes, and in dire extremity a newspaper, though it is not as efficacious as unprinted white paper, in proportion to the amount of black print which it carries ; but any such white surface, placed so that the light faces directly on it, will reflect an amount of light that will probably astonish you. Just by way of convinc-

ing yourself, place a vase or any similar object on a table a yard or two from the window, and then hold a large sheet of white paper a few inches from the vase, but on the side farthest from the window, and at such an angle that the paper catches the whole of the light. Notice the effect this white paper has on the side of the vase nearest to it; it is almost as though some one had turned on a light—the dark side of the vase becomes quite brightly illuminated from the light reflected by the white paper. It is on this principle that a reflector is used for indoor portraiture, the reflector consisting of a sheet or white cloth thrown over a “horse,” or any similar contrivance which circumstances or ingenuity may suggest.

If these directions have been understood, and if they are followed, I can hardly see how even the most inexperienced can fail as regards the direction of light; but before going further, let me jot down the following suggestions.

“First: If the light side of the face is so strongly lighted that you cannot see the flesh tints in the very highest light—that is, if the highest light on the face is white and garish—you have too much light, and will have to tone it down. To do this, all that is necessary will be to hang a white cloth over the upper portion of the window, or that part that is not covered with the opaque shade, running from the bottom.



“Second : Do not get the reflector too far in the rear of the subject, or it will give a harsh light just under the ear. Keep it well up to the front.

“Third : Later on I shall have something to say about exposures for indoor portraits ; in the meantime, remember to time your exposures for the deepest shadows, for, as I have already pointed out, the camera and lens will only give you the expression and lighting which are present, and actually there when you expose your plate, so you will only get what you expose for ; and if the time was only long enough for the high lights, you will not secure the half-tones and shadows, but if you expose long enough for the shadows you will get them.

“Fourth : In developing you must pay first consideration to the high lights, and as soon as they are dense enough you must stop. If you neglect these, and think chiefly of getting details out of the shadows, as likely as not you will over-develop, and get harsh chalky lights. So develop for the high lights, and if then your shadows come too black, be sure your management of the reflector or the general lighting was at fault.

“Fifth : The highest light in the negative (on the face) should be on the forehead just over the eye, nearest the source of the light. The second high light will be on the nose, next on the upper lip, next on the chin, and next on the shadow cheek. If there is

no light on the shadow cheek, the face should be turned farther to the light, or until a spark of light can be seen in the shadow eye, and it will then be seen that the cheek has caught the light.

“Sixth : If the highest light is in the centre of the forehead, the face is turned too far to the light, in which case get the subject to turn back from the light until the outer corner of the shadow eye is just in the shadow.

“Seventh : If the lower part of the face is as strongly illuminated as the forehead, the shade on the window is too low down. Draw it up until the chin is in a lower key.”

### DEVELOPMENT

This will probably worry you. Well, the portrait has got to be developed, and so we may as well make up our minds to it. The beginner nearly always makes the mistake of developing with too strong a solution. You should recollect that there are not the same vigorous contrasts in a human face as there are in a landscape. There is nothing in the face to compare, for instance, with dark tree stems against a bright sky, so we must modify our practice and use a weaker developer.

I think you will have learnt that the more water we put in the developer the softer or flatter the picture and the slower it is in coming up. If, then, when developing a portrait negative the high lights come up fairly black,

a good way ahead of the rest of the subject, you may know that your developer is too strong. The high lights on making their appearance should seem grey, and then should refuse to gather intensity for a long time; meanwhile, the middle tones will have come up, and a darkening tint be evident in the shadows. Then continue developing only so long as to get moderate density in any part, and do not carry things as far as you would were you developing a landscape.

But stay, and let me tell you right here that if you have read one of the Little Books devoted to development, you will have learnt that, whatever the exposure and whatever the developer, the longer you develop the greater the density you secure, *provided always the light has to a reasonable extent operated on the film*; that is to say, you cannot develop out what isn't there.

Suppose in your indoor portrait there are certain brightly lighted spots, but the rest is deep shadow—a condition only too common with indoor portraits. Well, then, the developer finds ready response in the brightly lighted spots, which forthwith proceed to accumulate density; but the deep shadows, for which sufficient allowance has not been made, remain unaffected by the developer. Where there is nothing, nothing comes—where there has been no light action the developer

cannot drag anything out ; from which it ought to be clear to you that it is eminently necessary in portraiture to expose long enough to get what little there may be in the shadows fully recorded : because, you see, the developer goes straight for the most-acted-on parts and brings them up right away ; and whilst you are waiting for unacted-on shadows, or parts where there has been very little light action, the said most-acted-on parts continue to gain density, until they become so dense that, when subsequently printed from, they print nearly white, and so you get those black and white monstrosities which are far too common amongst amateur portraits. This is due solely to insufficient exposure, a misguided regard for the well-lighted parts and a disregard for the dark portions. But if the exposure be long enough to secure whatever detail, whatever indication of light and shade there may be in the shadows, then, when developing, these latter will come out before the unexposed parts have been in the developer long enough to accumulate too much density ; and a principle to be remembered is this, that a weak developer—that is, one which has had a large admixture of water—will bring out the less-exposed detail as well as the more-exposed without immediately piling up density on the latter ; so the moral is, expose sufficiently or even more than sufficiently, and dilute your developer.

Further reference to development will be found on page 51, in the course of some remarks on faces coming too dark and the influence of the background.

### EXPOSURE

The same consideration must guide us in exposing, for, as has been said in the foregoing suggestions, unless the exposure be long enough to secure something like gradation in the shadows, we shall only secure the higher tones and miss all the rest.

“That’s all very well,” you say. “What I want to know is just how long to expose. Is it seconds or minutes?” Let us hope the illumination of the room is great enough to admit of seconds, as it will hardly be possible to get your average sitter to remain still for minutes; but as in one’s own experience indoor portrait exposures have ranged from five to thirty seconds, it is a little difficult for me to say just what will be right in your case, not knowing the conditions. But if I cannot tell you just what exposure to give, I can tell you how you can find out for yourself.

I will suppose you have gone round the house and fixed upon the room, passage, or landing which answers most nearly to the conditions set forth in my little sketches. Now I propose you call this for the time being your studio, and then you should set about



learning all you can of its capabilities ; and do not wait until the first friend you want to take calls on you. You do not sing a song or play music before your friends without at least having tried it over first. So can you not just make one or two exposures by yourself, by way of experiment or practice ?

I wonder if you chance to have in the house a bust of some one,—it does not matter whether it is Beaconsfield or Gladstone or Clytie—she seems pretty popular in the average suburban villa, at least ; and if your plaster bust be dusty and toned down by the hand of time, so much the better. If you like to go to the expense of seeking out an Italian maker of plaster figures, and get him to tint a large-sized bust (a damaged one at half price will do very well) to a pale buff colour, you will have an invaluable “ lay figure ” on which to practise.

Failing an inanimate model, you must prevail on a living one, and living or dead, set the model in the position indicated by my little sketches. Adjust the blind, the background, and the reflector as already directed, and then put the largest stop in the lens. Focus carefully to see if the stop is small enough. A good authority, and one quite innocent of extreme notions, has written as follows on the question of what stop to use in portraiture :

“The size of the stop to be used in portraiture and the degree of definition



Fig. 1.



Fig. 2.



Fig. 3.



Fig. 4.



Fig. 5.



Fig. 6

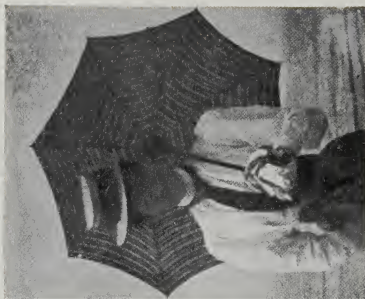


Fig. 7.

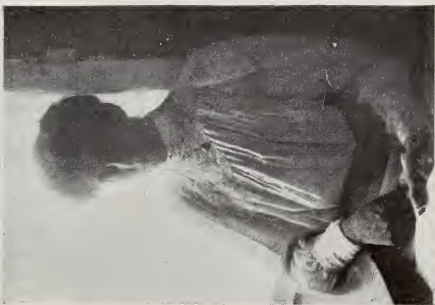


Fig. 8.



Fig. 8A.

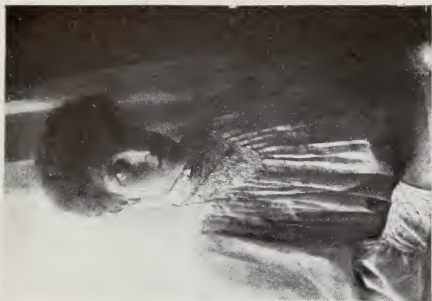


Fig. 9.



Fig. 9A.



Fig. 10.

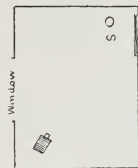


Fig. 10A.





Fig. 11.



Fig. 11A



Fig. 12.

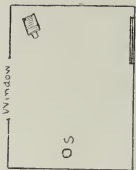


Fig. 12A.



Fig. 13.

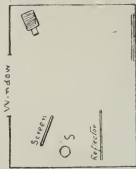


Fig. 13A.



are matters calling for a hint or two for the beginner, who is often tempted to think that the sharper the definition the better the picture. This is by no means so, and especially in the case of portraiture, when a general impression is of far greater importance than any special detail. Let the reader pause a moment, and attempt accurately to draw or describe the exact shape of the features of any tolerably familiar acquaintance. It is easy to get as far as 'a prominent nose, firm lips, laughing eyes,' etc., etc.; but when it comes to *exact* shapes, sizes, etc., what then? A friend may have a scar on his cheek; we may know its exact shape, size, colour, position,—but it is not that which makes the portrait. True, it is part, but only one among many other factors. But an experiment will often convince when dogmatising raises antagonism. Therefore, let the reader take two portraits of the same sitter. Let one be 'sharp-all-over,' even to the collar-stud and pattern of the tie, etc. Let the other be only just sharp enough to show shapes and forms, but *not* to show the threads of the draperies or single hairs in eyebrows, etc. Or, again, print a sharp-all-over negative on smooth paper and on rough, and let the comparison of results speak for themselves.

"No rules can be laid down, nor are they desirable. It is better to look at one's sitter, and then slowly close

one's eyes until just the desirable degree of softness of definition is seen through the partly-closed lids. Note this, and then aim to get this effect on the ground glass by changing the stop and using the focussing screw.

“One principle seems of general application—viz. that it is not good for pictorial purposes (landscape or portrait) to have such sharp or such fuzzy definition as to call attention to itself for either extreme. If one part of a picture be conspicuously sharp or out of focus as compared with the rest, this extreme part, by sheer force of contrast to the neighbouring parts, is apt to call (unworthy) attention to itself. Portrait and other lenses of large aperture are apt to have but little depth of focal field or depth of focus, and also some have curvature of the field as well; so that with such a lens we may have one eye in a ‘three-quarter’ portrait sharply defined, and the other eye almost unintelligible. Or one part of a man's beard may look like pin-wire, and the other part like cotton-wool or smoke. Clearly, such inconsistencies have only to be mentioned to be condemned. At the same time, a warning against the other extreme, monotony of definition, is equally called for.”

Well, I must leave it to you. Be moderate in your focussing. Get a good example of portraiture,—not just anything by a local professional, because that sort of thing may be very well

in its way, but it is not a very high-class way as a rule ; it would be better to get the reproduced portrait of some world-famed celebrity in a magazine,—and just see how sharp or how un-sharp that is, and be guided thereby.

Well, but this has been a long digression on the subject of stops, focussing, and definition, whereas I started to advise you on the subject of exposure. But, you see, you must settle on what stop you are usually going to employ, and then stick to it ; also, you should keep to one brand of plates for your portraits, whatever you do for your landscapes, etc.

No matter what some may have told you about the danger of using very rapid plates, you will certainly be giving away a possible advantage if you do not use extra rapid plates for indoor portraits.

Now, then, try an experimental exposure on your plaster bust or your patient sitter, and start with, say, three seconds ; make two more, one of, say, ten seconds, and one of twenty seconds.

When you develop these you ought to have some idea as to which is nearest to correct exposure, and it has only cost you three plates ; and if you keep to the same stop and conditions generally, you will know what to do ever after.

Out of the hundreds of amateur portraits which are, at one time and another, submitted to me, a very considerable proportion fail in this

respect—that harsh lighting or under-exposure or over-development, and, perhaps, all three combined, result in excessive whiteness and flatness of the face.

Look at fig. 1, for instance, which is by no means as bad as many examples I receive with a request to point out the faults. Compare in your mind this face with a real, living face. What is it that is wrong? Can you imagine the effect on you if you were to see a human figure surmounted with a face looking like this? Would you not at once be convinced that it is not a living person, but an effigy, or a “bogy” set up to frighten people or scare away birds?

Of course, the young lady in the portrait, should she read this, will quite understand I am not referring to her own face as it really is, but merely as the photographer has produced it.

We know the human face to be more or less round, and hence lighter on one side, and in one spot on that side, than elsewhere, precisely as the sun illuminates the sphere of the earth; but what about the right-hand side (the spectator's and camera's left) of *this* portrait? Did you not know that the face must really be round, could you take the part representing the forehead and right cheek to be anything but a *flat*, white surface? Do consider for a moment if you ever saw a human face even in the strongest light as white or so devoid of rotundity, detail, and

shadow as in this and the thousands of similar amateur portraits of which this is typical. Why, the nose and cheek are as white as the *white* of the eye. A face in white marble or a plaster cast would have more light and shade, indicating that the cheeks sink in on each side of the nose, and swell out more or less roundly over the cheekbones, and then curve away back to the ears.

In this portrait, moreover, it may be seen that the hands have fared hardly better than the face—the detail, the creases, lines, etc., have all, as it were, been wiped out—and so one comes to the conclusion that in some way the photograph has entirely misrepresented the subject.

Now look at fig. 2—and I am using the actual work of beginners instead of specially prepared illustrations, as being, perhaps, more appropriate. Here's a difference! So great is the contrast between this portrait and the first one that some may think the face too dark.

But seriously examine an average male friend, and compare the tint of his face with that of his white linen collar. Is not the difference about as great as that shown in this portrait? Notice, moreover, that there is no doubt here about the face being round. You realise the ups and downs of each feature, as well as of the countenance as a whole. The light strikes the one ridge of the nose, the cheekbone, the



right temple, just as it would strike one spot on a smooth ball, thence gradually shading off. Overdone, however, it is apt to make the face look as though it were greasy, or moist, as on a very hot day. So please do not, in attempting to act on my advice, go to extremes.

Having called attention to the chief difference between these portraits, let us ascertain the cause, in order that the beginner may be shown a remedy.

The negative from which fig. 1 is printed is undoubtedly too dense in those parts representing the lightest portions, and we should probably find that the fault is in the developing. Suppose in the case of fig. 2 we call the white collar and the small points of highest light on the nose, etc., 1, and the darkest spot—the shadows on the coat—20: all the other tones or shades, such as the face, hair, shirt-front, shoulders, etc., would represent all the intermediate numbers, the negative being of such a character that each step of the scale duly prints, and so gives a regular gradation. But in fig. 1, if here we call the whites of the eyes 1, and the black background 20, it appears that the negative is of such a character that tints 2, 3, 4, 5, etc., which would be the various tints of shade in the face, all print the same as 1—that is, they don't print at all! Looking at the negative, we find that the reason is, these parts of the negative are nearly of the same density as the whites of the

eyes. When this negative was developed the whites of the eyes would come up first, and soon gain the full amount of density required to print white. If development had then been stopped the parts required to print 2, 3, 4, etc., would each have been a little thinner, and so printed a tone or two lower; instead of which, as development was continued, then, like exhausted runners in a race, each part slackening slightly as it reached maximum density, the next gradation nearly caught up, until quite a number of parts were almost of the same degree of opacity. Such a negative, then, is too dense—that is, too dense in parts—or perhaps it would be better expressed by saying it has too many nearly equal densities due to too prolonged development. On the other hand, if the exposure has been too short, or the developer too strong (by which I mean not sufficiently diluted), then these lighter portions will gather this excessive density whilst you are waiting for the less exposed parts—the darks and shadow—to respond to its action; so that the error may be due to either of these causes, and not to long development.

Now, in fig. 1 the face and eyes are turned directly *towards* the light, which rarely results in a successful portrait, whereas the face in fig. 2 is turned *from* the light, and the slightly drooping eyes constitute a much easier position, and will often be found to be a last and a successful resort if you have a difficult

subject ; but as to this I shall have more to say presently.

Whilst lighting is important—most important—what about the attitude in which you place your sitter, or allow your sitter to place himself or herself ? A well-lighted portrait may easily be utterly spoilt by the position in which the individual places himself.

If your portrait includes no more than head and shoulders, then I am going to ask you to accept the edict of my riper judgment against what you feel to be justifiable inclination on your part, and I ask this because I know I am right. When I first took to making portraits in a studio for a living—and I have had a few years' experience of that, and should therefore know what I am talking about—I felt as you, no doubt, feel ; but gradually I realised that there were rules to be learnt, even though those rules seemed opposed to all reason and common-sense. So now, if your portrait include only head and shoulders, you must recognise one thing, and that is that your portrait represents the individual apart from any outside influences or interests, and hence the pose of the head must not be one which it may be supposed is occasioned by some circumstance not seen.

Perhaps you do not catch my meaning. I will try and make myself clearer. Suppose you let your model occupy himself by reading a book, stooping the shoulders, bending the head, and drooping the eyes. If in your

portrait you include the hands and the book, the attitude explains itself and the whole is appropriate; but if you only take in head and shoulders, you have the downcast glance and bent head with nothing to account for it. In a three-quarter-length portrait there are some attitudes in which the head bending slightly to one side or the other may be most desirable, as balancing the figure generally; but if the figure be not included and is not there to be balanced, then the one-sided tilt of the head will seem ridiculous. So it may be safely laid down as a general rule that in the "bust" portrait the head should be erect and the shoulders symmetrical, the general pose as simple and commonplace as possible.

For any tilt or poise of the head there must be something in the picture to account for it, but in a mere head-and-shoulders portrait there is nothing to account for anything, and so there must be nothing to account for. However still, awkward, or unnatural it may seem, both to you and to the sitter himself, you must insist on his sitting bolt upright and holding his head erect, unless your portrait is to include body, arms, hands, etc., when your difficulties will increase just as you have more points to think about.

Remember, now, what your friends usually do when you ask them to sit down and keep quite still whilst you make their portrait. Down they sit, straight facing you, the hands in front,

and, if a man, the knees wide apart and one hand on each, or crossing the legs and depositing his hands in a heap on top ; if a lady, she probably deposits her hands in her lap, and looks the very picture of resignation.

This arrangement of limbs and hands is almost invariable, and is just about the most unsuitable that can possibly be.

I wonder, now, if all this attempted



Sketch No 1.

description of what usually takes place when the amateur photographer asks a friend to sit to him seems foolish and unnecessary. I cannot think it is either, certainly not the latter, if only by hammering away I can decrease the number of portraits made in which this unsuitable and altogether undesirable pose is perpetuated ; for, to say nothing of the fact that it is not graceful, it means bringing hands, knees, and



sometimes feet so close to the camera that they are depicted much too large in proportion to the face, which, whether it be beautiful and noble or not, is, after all, the chief purpose of the portrait.

I have tried to make some rough outline sketches which may help to make my meaning clearer, and in no. 1 we have just the natural spontaneous position which will be taken up by nine males out of ten when asked to sit for a portrait, only my drawing should have made the feet much larger.

Oh, but you may say the exaggeration of the feet is a fault of the lens. Nothing of the sort! The lens is not like a human being, liable to tell falsehoods on occasion. It cannot and does not lie; it records everything accurately *in proportion to the angle of view* it is made to include. I cannot stay now to discuss the properties of a lens, but you may take it from me that this is so; in proportion to the angle included by the lens the relative size of near and far objects—that is the perspective—is correct. What proportion does your hand bear to the window? Hold your hand near enough to your one eye, the other being closed, and your hand will eclipse the window! You see it depends on nearness. Now, then, shift your camera to this young man's left-hand side; he will probably turn his head a bit round to see what

you are about, and then you have a position something like no. 2.

This, though not right, at least gets over the trouble of hands and feet being nearer than the face. That's what I have again and again tried to explain to the novice; but whilst talking about feet, and how ugly most people's booted feet are, I suggest that you should never include the feet, or rather the boots, if you can avoid it.

Move the camera nearer, so that the



Sketch No. 2.

lens only takes in just below the knees; the inclusion of the feet is not essential to any man's portrait.

Most people, when seated for their portrait, lean back in their chair like the young man in no. 2, only I find I have forgotten to draw the chair-back, and you will generally find it advisable to ask your sitter to sit farther into the chair so as to bring the back a little more vertical. Moreover, taking no. 2 as a guide, the head

should be thrown a little more forward, so that the chin does not stick out quite so much; and probably it may be advisable to ask that the face be turned a little more towards you, but not so much as to give a screwed and uncomfortable twist to the neck.

Now you are ready. "Keep just like that," you say, and swiftly put in a dark slide; you then draw the slide, and you say, "Do you feel quite comfortable?" or "You are taking it rather seriously. *Ah, don't move!*" Your friend will probably make a facial distortion somewhere between an agonised grin and a smile; then watch, and when the smile has *nearly* died away—click—and your portrait *ought* to be—well, if not a success, somewhere near to it.

When one thinks about it, despite the infinitude of expressions we attribute to the human face, the actual alterations due to muscular contraction are quite limited, and the diabolical grin of demoniacal fury, if instantaneously fixed, is not so very different from the grinning expression provoked by some joke: the cheeks go back (with some, dimples are formed), the corners of the mouth curl up, and the corners of the eyes, where the "crow's feet" will come some day, crease up, the lips part, and the teeth are shown. An embryonic smile and a snarl are still more closely alike as regards the lines formed in the face; and the lesson to be derived from this is, never

attempt to portray your friend laughing, or even with a fully developed smile; you *cannot* do it satisfactorily, so don't try. After all, a laugh, both visually and orally, even in a most beautiful person, is quite hideous, were it not for the contagion of hilarity, and the knowledge that it betokens happiness. But this is bordering on something quite apart from photography.

Make the person seen as no. 2 sit up a little more, lower the chin a trifle, perhaps turn the face the least degree more this way; include only a little below the seat of the chair; induce him to show some interest in your conversation by some trivial remark; let him smile,—and then, as the smile is disappearing, not before, make a quick exposure.

And all this in order that you shall secure an attitude and an expression which shall seem more natural than if you just took him as he really is.

Now as to the position of the portrait on the plate. This seems a simple matter, does it not? And so it is; yet how often one sees the head and shoulders appearing thrust into the corner of the photograph, as though the person were slipping out at the bottom of the picture! In nine cases out of ten the head is placed too low in the picture, as in fig. 3. What in the world is the use or interest in several feet of wall space, the chimney-piece, etc.? How much better it

would have been had the head come near the top of the picture and the figure filled the plate. In fig. 1, for instance, this has been better done; the face, and such part of the figure as is included, occupy the entire plate. A portrait should be a portrait, and not a photograph of the interior of a room with a figure introduced. Bear in mind that you will always lend dignity and importance to the individual portrayed if you have very little space above the head.

Either bring the camera near enough to your sitter to make him occupy the whole plate, or if you take him on a smaller scale, then trim down the print afterwards so as to leave little else but the face or figure.

You see, the more space in the picture that is occupied by the figure, the less there will be for background, and thus you will evade the solution of what is often a difficult problem.

Indoors or out-of-doors you must have an eye to the background, and by background I mean practically everything included in the picture besides the person whose portrait is being taken; but especially the scene or objects which are behind the sitter, and against which, with more or less contrast, the head and figure are seen. It very often happens that the photographer is so taken up with the face of his sitter that he is blind to the background, and does not notice that there are ugly and unsightly things



included which had better be left out.

In fig. 3 I have suggested that it would have been better if less background had been included, the figure being larger in proportion to the whole picture; but if, on the other hand, there was any reason for including so much space, it would have been better had the background been almost entirely devoid of such objects as the mantel-piece, framed pictures, etc.; and yet it must be admitted that in this respect it is not as bad as it might be, and as one often sees, for at least the space immediately behind the head is simple, and not broken up with disturbing objects.

Out-of-doors the beginner not unnaturally selects a hedge, an ivy-covered trellis work, or something of the kind in front of which to place his sitter, with the result that the mass of foliage, if sharply focussed, has a confused and disturbing effect, the face seeming muddled up with the details of the leaves.

As often as not the photographer does not seem to realise how prominent the incongruous background is until it is reproduced in the photograph.

As an example, and not such a very bad one either, here is what one may call a back-garden portrait (fig. 4), in which it would appear that the photographer had some glimmering of a notion about seeking a plain background, and so chose the door of the

coal-shed ; but, alas ! the door wasn't wide enough, and he did not notice that when the position, etc., was finally chosen half the background was occupied by door and half by white-washed wall. Observe how ugly this is, as compared with fig. 5, in which the background is more uniform in tone. This matter of background or surroundings is so important, and yet it so generally gets overlooked by the beginner eager to use his camera in portraying his friends. Look round the premises, and see if there is any spot where a quite blank wall can be used as a background. It must not be brick or stone, because the pattern of the bricks and mortar and the joins in the stone will be as bad as anything else. A plain stucco or cement wall will do, but your sitter must not be too close to it, or the detail, the grain, will be sharply focussed and come out unpleasingly. Your best plan is to purchase a *plain* or *graduated* background, not on any account one with a view painted on, and contrive some way of setting up this background whenever required.

"Oh !" say you, "but I like a natural setting to my portraits, a view of the garden or tennis lawn, the clematis-covered summer-house, and so forth."

Then you must relinquish the idea of making the portrait anything more than a mere incident in the general landscape, whereas I am supposing

that your purpose is to produce a photograph the chief and almost entire interest in which is the portrait. Even if you do include a view of the garden in your portrait, you should depict the garden and surroundings in so general and diffused a manner that the representation is of little value. Notice any portrait which has been taken with sharply focussed surroundings, and compare it with another in which the background, etc., is more or less out of focus, made so purposely in order to give prominence to the figure. In the first instance the face and figure are mixed up and confused with the background; in the latter the figure stands away, and assumes thereby more importance. The particular interest in the surroundings is sacrificed, it is true; but then, you cannot have it every way—there always must be a compromise.

And now remember that the colour, or rather the tone, of the background largely influences the tone of the portrait; for instance, if a person has fair hair, and the head is placed against a background lighter in colour than the hair, the latter will come out comparatively dark. In a general way, a background of medium tone will be most useful. Never place your sitter in the sun nor in deep shade. Watch the behaviour of the light very carefully. Suppose you place your sitter in the shade of a tree, be sure not to overlook the fact if the sunshine

comes through in spots, and perhaps places a bright spot on the face or some part of the dress, which may look all right in nature, because you know it to be sunlight ; but in your portrait it will look quite otherwise. In the same way, the face of a person wearing a hat will, if in the sunshine, often look exactly as though the upper half of the face where the shadow of the hat-brim falls were masked ; and avoid getting the face against the sky.

In what scores of instances we see portraits with nearly black faces in consequence of the relatively light background !

Here, for example, fig. 6 is an outdoor snapshot of a young lady, and the natural inquiry would be, " Why has she a black face ? " In this particular case the evil might have been remedied, or rather prevented, by longer development ; although the fact of the face being seen with a light sky as a background, the face itself being turned *from the light*, is the origin of the trouble.

When previously speaking of development I intimated that I should make a further reference to the matter in the present connection, in which there is a marked fault due to insufficient development.

If you recall what happens in such a case as this, you will no doubt remember that, soon after you pour on the developer, parts of the film representing the high lights of the scene begin to darken ; then other portions

follow, and then the whole becomes merged in one black cloud. Naturally, you conclude development is complete, and you take the plate out, fix it, and wash it, only to find that the entire image is very thin, and will not yield anything but a cloudy dark print devoid of contrast. What has happened is this:—The film must be regarded as being of a certain thickness, which the light, if strong enough or if allowed long enough, *penetrates in parts*, whilst it *affects slightly all over* the surface. Your developer brings out this effect of light in proportion to the light's action—first, of course, where it has acted most. As the whole surface has been more or less affected, the whole surface soon becomes blackened, and if you then fix your plate, the fixing dissolves out all the silver which has not been developed, leaving only this developed *surface* action.

Had it been allowed more time it would have gone on working deeper in the film where the stronger light action had penetrated, whilst where the light had only affected the surface, density would have increased only a very little or perhaps not at all, for the developer can only take effect where the light has first produced something for it to bring out. You know when the ground in summer lies parched and dry, a very short shower of rain quickly darkens the blanched mould, and the garden looks for the moment comfortably watered. Soft



parts and hard parts, absorbent mould and hard rock, are all alike influenced ; but if the rain continue it will have no further effect on the rock surface, but it will gradually sink deeper and deeper where the earth is soft ; then when the rain ceases, which is equivalent to the fixing process, the surface is quickly dried, but the sunk-in water remains to nourish the deeper roots. It is much the same with our developer. It must have time to sink in wherever the light has prepared the way ; otherwise we only develop the surface action, where light and dark are distinguished by but little difference, and hence we have a flat weak print devoid of contrast.

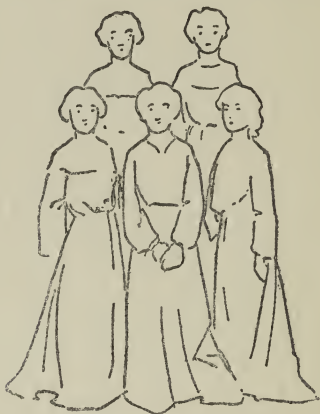
Generally speaking, I think it will be found that the beginner who is troubled with dark faces in his portraits will get over the difficulty by developing longer and so securing more density.

On the other hand, it must be remembered that if the face is to be white in the portrait it must be white in the original—that is, it must be so situated as to receive plenty of light ; but the truth is, we expect to see faces in portraits much lighter when compared with other objects than they really are or should be. In the case of fig. 7, the face seems unnaturally dark perhaps, but it is not relatively darker than a face would be which is screened from the light by a sunshade, although further density could no doubt have been secured in the face by longer

development. Do not run away with the notion that your sitters' faces must be so very light; to get them a harsh chalky white, devoid of shade, is quite as bad as to get them too black.

### OUTDOOR GROUPS

Of course, what applies to single figures applies to groups of several, except that the need for care as to



Sketch No. 3.

lighting, etc., is multiplied by the number of people in the group.

The special difficulty with groups relates to the arranging of the figures in a well-balanced, yet not too symmetrical, group.

If I refer you to sketch no. 3, where five persons are arranged in symmetrical fashion, you will very likely say, "Of course, I can see that's wrong." Really! but are you sure you have not tried

to make a portrait group of four or five or, more persons, arranging them or allowing them to arrange themselves in much this fashion? Father and married son stand at the back, looking straight at you, perhaps with head on one side, and screwing up the eyes on account of the bright light. Mother and daughter-in-law stand in front, also facing the camera squarely; and—



Sketch No 4.

well, perhaps, the third generation come in front, making a third tier.

Perhaps you say you do not care so long as you get a good likeness? Yes, but isn't it worth while doing things so that a good likeness when you do get it shall not be spoilt by a poor arrangement?

Now look at sketch no. 4, where somebody's five sisters have been formed into a more irregular but surely a more pleasing group; and provided the likenesses were as good as in no. 3, surely it were better to have a *seemingly*

more natural group than the other, which, truth to tell, was really more true to the spontaneous grouping of five average mortals.

It is often a good plan to get your sitters to slightly lean towards a common centre, thus bringing the heads more or less together. On no account place one head below another, nor have one person sitting and another standing behind, for in that case the two heads form two widely separated points of interest.

In groups of three, four, five, or even six persons there should be no great difficulty in securing this leaning together or concentration. It is not so possible in larger groups; but in any case it must not be evident—it must not be done to so marked a degree that any one can see at once that you have been trying to do it. The group should always seem as though the people had come quite naturally together; and, truth to tell, it will usually be found that the group which looks the most natural will be the one which is the least really spontaneous, and the one which has been most carefully planned and thought out.

Then in a large group the background constitutes an additional difficulty, because the larger the area included, the greater the risk of including some feature which will seem incongruous and diverting; but whatever the background, let the group be placed some

way in front of it, and then the details of the background can be made less obtrusive by putting it slightly out of focus.

The principle of giving prominence to a figure or figures in a portrait study or group, and suppressing interest in the rest of the scene, at least has the sanction of custom, for note the professional studio portrait when shown with a painted background of castle, terrace, and distant mountains, etc. This view is not depicted sharply and clearly ; it is not even painted sharply, the intention of the background painter being that the scene should, by reason of its lack of sharpness, "go back," or retire.

## PORTRAITS IN SMALL ROOMS

And now I ask my reader to refer to the middle pages of this little book, which carry the half-tone illustrations, or reproductions of actual photographs. Amongst these will be found several portraits of the same young lady illustrating the possibilities—and the impossibilities !—of portraiture in a small room. Perhaps the first thing that will strike one is the great diversity of appearances the same person may assume, which may serve as a sidelight on the question of how it is that portraits are so seldom good likenesses ; and I think it will be found that the solution of the problem is *light and*



*shade*. A good likeness depends on the light and shade being so disposed that features are not distorted or exaggerated.

To begin with, I want to anticipate an objection, or an apology, which is often forthcoming from readers of *The Amateur Photographer* when asking advice. Again and again I am asked to take into consideration the fact that the only room available is *small*, and I can quite see that it is not always convenient to rig up a special blind, such as has already been suggested, which can be drawn upwards instead of down.

Of course, I consider that the photographer who is anxious to obtain good at-home portraits should think it worth while to make just a little preparation ; still, I quite recognise that a considerable proportion, and perhaps the majority, of the readers of the Little Books are photographers of a kind who do not want to prepare anything, but expect to go straight ahead and achieve the desired end there and then ; and, if they cannot do so, they will very likely give up photography altogether.

It is the ninety-and-nine erring photographer sheep which I am anxious to save ; the one who is going along steadily and studiously may be trusted to work out his own salvation. The room in which this series of experimental portraits was made measures 12 ft. by 9 ft., and, inasmuch as a whole-plate camera, with a lens of 12 in. focal length, was used, the difficulty arising

from being too near to one's sitter was rather increased.

Moreover, this series of examples has been specially chosen, because no preparation of the room was made; the window was a large one, with no roller blind, merely what are known as curtain blinds, so that the light could not be controlled, as has been suggested in an earlier part of this book, by placing the roller blind at the bottom of the window, and drawing it up so as to cut off the light from the lower half of the window. No background was used and no reflector; thus the condition of affairs was just such as one might have had to face, suppose a visit were being paid to a friend's house, and one were asked to make a portrait then and there.

In fig. 8 we have an example of the result of what I find the beginner usually does—namely, place the sitter as near as possible to the window, under the not unnatural impression that there the light will be strongest. The little diagram under the portrait shows the position of window, sitter, and camera.

Of course, the nearer the window, that is, so far as the room is concerned, the stronger the light; but one must learn to recognise that such stronger light is only of use when it falls *directly on to* the object to be photographed. You place your sitter immediately adjacent to the window, as in fig. 8, and you may ask why does the face come out so dark

when, as you looked at the face, you could see it perfectly well, and no one could possibly have mistaken it for the face of a negress, such as the print represents it to be ?

Now, I wonder if I shall succeed in making the explanation of this clear to you.

Think for a moment and consider that, to represent open-air light, if not actual sunlight, as seen through a linen or muslin curtain, the utmost you can do is to use *white paper*. Yet a very little thought will, I feel sure, convince you that white paper is much lower in tone, that is, it is much less light than daylight ; and so, if we are compelled to put up with a lower interpretation of light, then of course everything else must be proportionately lower ; therefore the face of the sitter in fig. 8, although not black to our eye, is black proportionately to the manner in which our process compels us to represent the light in the curtained window. The curtain-blinds, made of white linen, were drawn, the lens was used at F/8 and an exposure of five seconds was given, a very rapid plate being used.

If development had been continued, in the hope of getting more out of the dark side of the face, the white curtain and the light edge of the sitter's right cheek would have become so dense as to have made printing impossible. Remember that all lights and darks are *relative*, that your photographic process *limits your range* or scale, and

that the light you want is not the light itself, but the light that falls upon the object.

Now look at fig. 9. The sitter has been moved a little distance away from the window, so that on the right side of the face at least we have light falling *on to* the object; it is an improvement on fig. 8, but still the conditions of relative light and shade necessitate our representing the left side of the face as black. It is very likely that, had it been possible or convenient to place, in the position of the line marked R, fig. 9A, a white sheet to act as a reflector, it would have greatly improved matters; but in the present series of examples it is assumed that, for some reason or other, no such accessories are available.

We must then seek some other position for the sitter—one in which the light will not cause such great contrasts. Now move the model to the other end of the small room and place the camera close to the window. The result is shown in fig. 10, and the relative positions of camera, window, and sitter are again shown in an adjoining little diagram. The chair is placed facing the window, and the sitter is then told to turn her head round towards her left so that the light falls directly on to the right cheek, and the general diffusion of light at that end of the room opposite the window keeps the left cheek from being in deep shadow. Moreover, the background is now a green wall-paper, which makes the face, even where

darkest, seem light by contrast. So far as lighting is concerned, fig. 10 is preferable to either of the other two, and indeed is fairly satisfactory; but there is another consideration, and that is likeness or the best aspect of the individual's features.

You have doubtless heard, for it is notorious, that every one has a good and a bad side to his or her face, and generally it is the appearance from the best side which gives the truest likeness. A comparison of figs. 8 and 9 with fig. 10 will, I think, show that in the latter the face is not so pleasing in shape as in 8 and 9, so that apparently the right side or, more likely still, a more frontal view will prove the better and more pleasing likeness.

Moving the model a little more to our right, or her left, as shown in the diagram adjoining fig. 11, we get the white door as a background, and we turn the head so as to get rather more the aspect obtained in fig. 8. The model's left cheek would no doubt have come a little darker, and would then have given the face more roundness, but that it has received a good deal of reflected light from the white enamelled door.

And here please note two mistakes have been made, due to that which, with the beginner in portraiture, so often leads to failure—namely, *not noticing*: that is to say, he thinks of, and is occupied by, how he expects and believes the portrait will be like, rather



than notices things *as they are*. The person is probably more or less familiar, and, even if the face be partly obscured by shadow and the light has a distorting effect, there is a something, a *tout ensemble*, whereby he at once recognises the individual. In conversation, the eyes are turned, perhaps, first one way and then another, there might even be a momentary squint—it would not matter; the memory of the face upon which subsequent recognition would depend is the aggregation of all the various phases put together, the impression is a collective one. Not so the photograph, which records but one aspect or phase, and hence we must choose the *one particular aspect* which comes nearest to the *collective impression*. Now, what I am driving at is this, that, whilst in real life it may have seemed very well for the young lady to be gazing at something or some one a little to the photographer's right, it is not satisfactory in the portrait, and gives the model a curious expression. The photographer *didn't notice* it at the time. As a general rule, to which, like all rules, there may be exceptions, it is best to let the sitter's eyes rest *somewhere about the centre of the lens*.

You remember how in childhood the photographer asked you to look for the little bird when he uncapped the lens, and consequently the childish attention and interested gaze was directed to the lens. Generally speaking, then, if the portrait is full-face or nearly so, the

eyes are best when directed towards the lens. Perhaps a better rule is to say that the eyes should always look in the same direction as the nose is pointing, with a tendency towards the camera.

The other matter due to "not noticing," to which I want to draw attention, is the finger-plate and door-handle, which obtrude themselves so offensively. The attention was so occupied in getting the expression and the lighting of the face right, that these disfiguring black spots were quite overlooked. Either the camera or the model should have been slightly moved so as to exclude these obtrusive objects.

In making portraits in ordinary living-rooms, there is always a danger that some such objects will be overlooked and included in the picture, where they attract notice, and detract from the importance of the portrait. It may be a picture frame, or some ornament, or a portion of some piece of furniture. Such things must be removed or in some way excluded.

By the time we have taken the fourth portrait, we ought to begin to discover that best side or best aspect to which reference has been made, and I suggest that if these four portraits be now developed, and printed, and then carefully studied, it may possibly dawn upon one that probably the young lady's left side is the best and will therefore yield a more recognisable as well as a more pleasing portrait; so on

another day let us try again, profiting by the experience already gained.

Let us then place the same model in such a position with regard to the window that the light falls directly on to the left side, the side which heretofore has been chiefly away from the light. Note the positions of window and sitter in the diagram attached to fig. 12. The light now falls direct on to the left side of the face, and the sitter is asked to turn the head first well away *from* the light and then to move it slowly back until the light just catches the right cheek-bone. "Raise the chin a little, tilt the head a little this way (strange that hardly any one ever sits with head perfectly erect). Now don't look too serious"—and then the shutter of the dark slide being open and your hand on the lens cap, you watch for just the moment when something like a smile is subsiding. You say "Now!" remove the cap, count about five seconds, or rather more, seven or eight, if you notice that the sitter seems pretty steady, replace the cap and say "Thank you!"

The result is fig. 12.

Perhaps you will be able to believe me when I say that this is a far better likeness of the young lady than any of the others; but now notice the defects. To begin with, the nose being naturally rather prominent it casts a very black and sudden shadow. This is not only due to the prominence of the nose, but it must be remembered that on the side

opposite the source of light there is no illumination at all, the green wall-paper background being of no use in this direction. Moreover, the room being small, the source of light—the window—is very near, and, as you may remember, the nearer anything is to lamp or other light, the sharper and deeper is the shadow cast. Well, we cannot alter the size of the room, so we borrow a clothes-horse and a white table-cloth wherewith to rig up a reflector.

Next notice that the body is cut off abruptly at about the waist. The bodice being light in colour, this is made more apparent, and this cut-off appearance is not best calculated to set off the face. So, with very little change in the sitter's attitude, we place the extemporised reflector in the position shown in the diagram adjacent to fig. 13, and we place between the sitter and the window what is described in the diagram as a screen. The object of the screen is to cast a shade over the lower part of the figure, so that the abrupt cutting off shall not be so apparent; a chair with a cloth over the back, or anything that may come first to hand is all that is required. As a matter of fact, in the present case, a folding fire-screen was taken from the grate, and set on two footstools to make it high enough, the height being adjusted to cast just as much shade as was required.

Fig. 13 is the outcome of this final attempt to take this young lady's portrait. The reflector has lightened

the shadow side and the screen has shaded down the lower part of the body, the previous experiment, fig. 12, having shown that the face might with advantage be turned just a trifle more full face. I have tried by a series of six examples to show how greatly one may err in trying to take a portrait in an ordinary room of small dimensions, and wherein the errors lie, and I strongly recommend my reader to devote a couple of afternoons to making a similar series, by which he will learn the possibilities of lighting, and having become accustomed to the particular room selected, the next portrait he attempts to take will be very much easier. He will very quickly learn to recognise certain stations in the room where the light is best and most readily managed. It is the definite systematic series of experiments and a careful comparison of results that will prove instructive, and then the experience gained in the one room will be of infinite service, should occasion arise for you to make a portrait in some strange room. It is the haphazard and guess-work sort of portrait-taking which so often ends in disappointment, and has earned for amateur portraiture such a bad name. I have been imagining that our portrait is to be made in a room of very limited size, but it is just conceivable that we may in an emergency want to make a portrait in even more confined area than a room 12 ft. by 9 ft., in fact some space in which it



would be impossible to swing the proverbial cat.

Provided that such restricted room does not cut off the light, it is quite possible to make a portrait satisfactorily in a space, say 6 ft. square—just large enough, in fact, to hold the model and the photographer and his camera—but you will require the assistance of a good-sized looking-glass—the larger the better.

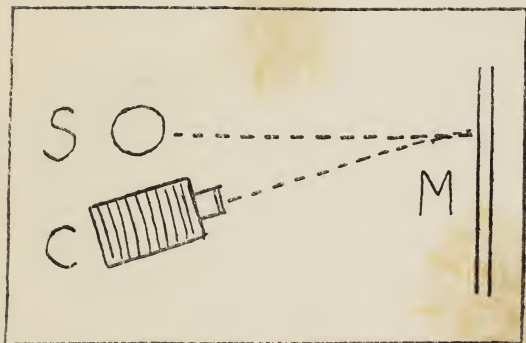
I was once called in to photograph an old lady a few hours before she died. She had been struck down on a journey, from London to the south, and I found her in bed in a tiny room of a small country inn. So small was the room, a mere garret, that the bed occupied the whole of one side of the room, and nearly one-half the entire floor space. There was not room to place the camera at the foot of the bed and operate in that position, neither was there room to set up the camera so as to photograph the dying lady side face. Fortunately, the window was on one side of the bed, so that the subject had a good side light.

I found that the woman who owned this modest hostelry possessed an old-fashioned cheval glass; this I borrowed, and placing it on its side at the bed-foot, I erected the camera close beside the pillow of my subject and *photographed the mirrored reflection* with a considerable measure of success. The principle involved is this, that the distance between the camera and the

model may thereby be made double the greatest possible distance available.

See the accompanying sketch.

Let the circle S be the sitter and C the camera, side by side, and M be a mirror. The image travels from S to M, and then from M to C, so that if the mirror, M, be only 3 ft. from the sitter, S, the sitter is actually 6 ft. from the camera, C, so far as photographing it is concerned; and, curiously enough, although everything is sharp in the



mirror, the background as well as the sitter, yet photograph it and you will find that, instead of photographing one flat plane like a picture, the background will not be sharp if the sitter is sharp, and so on. Objects in various planes will be sharp or otherwise, according to their distance from the mirror multiplied by two, although they appear all equally sharp in the mirror as we look at it.

One more hint, which was imparted to me by a correspondent. Should the

room be inconveniently small, pose the sitter opposite to the window as in fig. 10 or 11, and take the camera out of doors and, setting it up outside the window, open the latter, and photograph into the room.

I should have liked to have said a good deal more on the lighting of portraits out of doors; but this, together with other matters concerning the taking of figures in the open, may well form the subject of another Little Book.

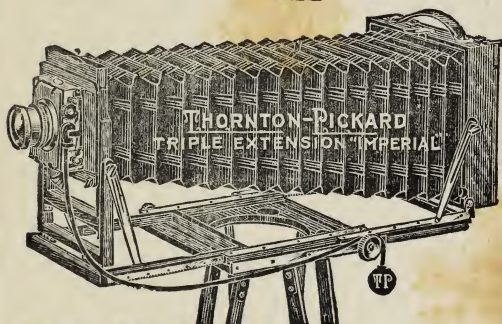
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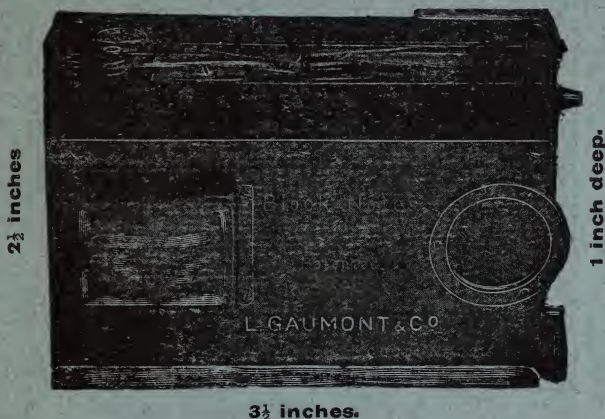
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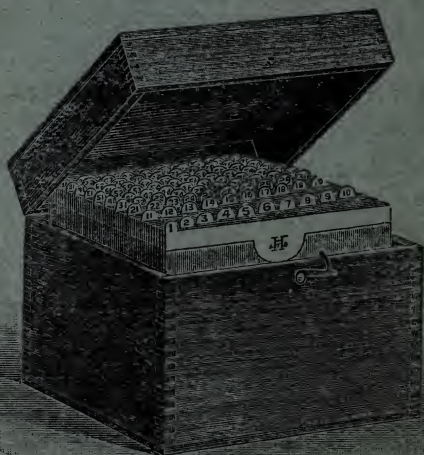
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